

LOCALS

BASKETBALL

Brown succeeds in Swiss league

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Phillip Brown arrived in Switzerland and found the culture to be somewhat similar.

“American culture is so ingrained over there,” Brown said. “The music, the fashion, the clothes, the NBA, all that.”

The biggest difference? The language.

The biggest surprise? The basketball.

“My game translated really well,” he said.

Brown, 24, who played at Travelers Rest High School and left North Greenville University as the sixth-leading scorer in its history, starred in his first season in Switzerland.

Playing in the LNB (Ligue Nationale B), one of two professional leagues in the country, the 6-foot-7 Brown was named Forward of the Year according to Eurobasket.com. He averaged 21.4 points, good for fourth in the league, and 11.4 rebounds, which ranked third.

“I knew how I play was going to fit really well there, because they like bigger guys that can shoot it, but I didn’t know that I was going to fit in that well, especially my first year,” Brown

said.

“It helped that I had a couple teammates who were really, really good. They were a couple veterans who kind of hitched their wagon to me, I guess you could say, and that kind of let me do whatever I wanted to do on offense, which helped a lot, because I had a lot of freedom.”

Brown helped his team, Meyrin Basket, advance to the championship series, where it lost to Lausanne.

It was a smooth transition for Brown on the court. Off the court, he had to deal with a little bit of a language barrier.

“They speak French, Italian and German, depending on where you are in the country, and I was right along the French border, so they spoke French where I was living,” Brown said. “But if you go up north, more toward Germany, they speak German, and then kind of in the middle they speak Italian here and there.

“I found a lot of people who spoke English, because I was living right in Geneva, so there were a lot of American businesses that had made their way (there), just because the city’s so big, and a lot of people spoke English, so it wasn’t terrible for

me, and a lot of my teammates spoke English, and my coaches do, so that was good.”

Brown signed a nine-month contract before last season and then a second nine-month contract after the season. He’s scheduled to head back to Switzerland Thursday.

He’s been home for the last three months, or at least that’s where he started.

He’s been all over the place — North Carolina, Georgia, the Charleston area.

He’s been doing camps, training individual clients, playing tournaments for money — “basketball non-stop,” he said.

But he said he’s looking forward to heading back overseas.

“I’ve been living in Travelers Rest for so long, once you go anywhere like that it’s different,” Brown said. “But I enjoyed it. I met a lot of people and made a lot of contacts over there.

“As long as I have the drive and I’m successful, why not (keep playing)? I only get to do it once. Eventually the ball’s going to stop bouncing, so I might as well play as long as I’m healthy and I have the drive. I want to get better and get in the gym, and I enjoy it.”



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Phillip Brown, with the Swiss Alps near Gruyeres in the background, was named Forward of the Year after his first year of professional basketball.